



MIND MATTERS

Talks by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

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Talks by H. H. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

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Preface

One of the world's most inspirational and dynamic leaders, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is also one of the most original thinkers of our times. Emphasising practical wisdom, He has transformed millions of lives all over the globe. His talks are a blend of knowledge and guidance, delivered with simplicity and humour – a powerful and unbeatable combination that touches lives and hearts.

It is with great joy that we offer this deeply absorbing collection of profound, yet simple talks on the matters of the mind given by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, over a period of time. They compel one to delve deeper, ponder further and look beyond the obvious.

1. Worldly Instincts

Cravings that keep you away from the truth

What is it that keeps you far and away from reality, from truth and from the divine? They are four types of fears or cravings that bind you to the world. These are called *Aishanas*, and they are – *Putraishana*, *Vittaishana*, *Lokaishana* and *Jeevaishana*.

First is *Putraishana* – Ever thinking about one's progeny; attachment to one's children. Tomorrow, when they grow up and don't have time for you, you will be heartbroken. In reality, whose children are they? They are God's children. You were just the doorway for them to come through. But people say, "Oh my children, my children." It gets you so feverish in your mind. it clogs your thinking so much that you don't really see what is good for them. There are so many problems and sufferings because of this *aishana*.

Then comes *Vittaishana* – money. I know an old woman who would say, "If somebody is sick in their head, give them lots of coins. They'll go on counting, and the sickness will go away." *Vittaishana* is hunger for money. How much can you have? What do you want to do with it? Okay, let's say you have 30 million dollars. What will you do with it? Are you going to enjoy thirty million in your lifetime? Money is essential but the craving for money can overshadow you and your life so completely that you will be unable to see the reality, recognise love, and see something beyond.

Vittaishana binds you. It is a book that keeps your mind in the bank. It gives you false security. Some billionaires were stranded in the Sahara desert for many days, fighting like dogs over a loaf of bread and getting into a panic for a bottle of water. Haven't you seen this? People who were very rich had to abandon everything and become paupers overnight.

Very big companies, who have billions, are in debt. Don't you know this? Why worry so much about money? Have trust and say, "Let what I need be provided" and then work, putting in 100 per cent of yourself into it. See what happens – whatever is to come will come. And whatever has to be spent will be spent.

Then follows *Lokaishana*. You may not care so much about money. But what you care about now is – “Oh! What will people think about me?” You want to be praised by everybody in the world; want to be famous; want to be something; want to do something so that your name should be there for all generations to come; want to become immortal!

What is happening to the people who are very famous? Does their fame remain the same all the time? Some other person becomes a little more famous than them – say, another singer, another actor, another dancer. This puts a lot of fire in them. They become jealous and start criticising the others. And they become very unhappy! When you are at the peak of fame and trying to maintain it, there is so much fear and uneasiness in you. You become so uncomfortable. This ‘wanting’ so as to be able to show off, for other people’s sake, for what others will say, is *lokaishana*. *Lokaishana* can create fear in you and pull you down.

Then comes *Jeevaishana* – the fourth *aishana* – wanting to live longer; wanting to become physical y immortal. But why make the physical body immortal? Nature is providing you with a fresh body again and again. When there are so many fresh apples growing, why keep one apple, make it ancient, and then eat it?

The body is a perishable item. People who have not lived their lives fully have this craving to live longer and longer. You see these very sick people, who are absolutely ill; they are not ready to die. They say, “I want to live a few more years. I should see the end of this century” – *Jeevaishana*, holding on to life. People who have incurable diseases, amputated limbs, don’t want to die. They hanker to live longer and longer. What is its result? It does not allow them to enjoy the moment, to be free. And it creates tension in life.

A healthy man will die, and a sick person will also die. A patient dies, a doctor dies. Every ‘body’ will die. It is an inevitable phase of life. It has a beginning and an end. It is going to happen and it will happen. That does not mean you don’t have to take care of your body. You should take absolute care of this body, but without feverishness, without this *aishana*.

When these four types of fears disappear, then you are qualified to sit close to the divine. Sit in *Upanishad*, and walk through the gates of *Gurumandala*. ‘*Upanishad*’ means being totally in the present moment, with the willingness to hear and observe; ready to catch the moment; like a thirsty man waiting for water. This waiting, this longing, this readiness brings the wandering mind closer. Then something happens – a phenomenon takes place.

Then you are qualified to hear about the *Brahman*. What is that ‘something’ beyond this world? What is the reality? What is the truth? What is the centre of all this? Then this secret, which is very sacred, will be revealed to you through the *Gurumandala*.

Gurumandala literally means ‘drawing concentric circles’ – charming circles. In the centre is the ‘*Guru*’. Around the *Guru* there will always be many attractive things, many talented people and different types of charms. And when you are going towards the centre, it is always possible that you could get stuck with the ‘*aishanas*’.

Simply sitting and saying “Who am I? Who am I?” will not lead you anywhere! You have to cross over all these temptations, and come to the *Gurumandala*!

2. Mind Space

The mind has two abilities – one is to focus, the other is to expand and relax. When you put a thread through a needle, the mind is focusing. When you are looking at the empty sky, the mind is expanding. This ability to focus and expand should come simultaneously in the consciousness – all the confusion is between this focus and expansion.

Continue doing whatever you are doing. Be at peace in your mind. Let go of everything. Put away all your worries; they are nothing. When you let go, you will realise you are peace. What is stopping you from knowing that you are peace? You are not letting go; so let go. You know, when you watch the sky and move at the same time, it appears as though the sun is moving. It looks as if the moon is moving, but actual y it's the clouds that move. Have you experienced this illusion?

You are the background of all the phenomena, like a movie screen. whatever happens on it, the screen is untouched in the background. So you are the background on which different phenomena move – they happen and vanish!

Tomorrow is another day – another morning, afternoon, evening, midnight, and then tomorrow's gone. Some days you have highs, some days you have lows. But where are they all? All gone! Till this moment, all is gone. Right now, right now, right now. This is awareness; this is knowledge.

What's happening now? There is some 'yes' and 'no' going on in your mind. With awareness of thoughts like, "Oh! I feel good!", "I feel bad!", "I don't feel good!" and other such things, you are lifted to a completely different level of existence. Much higher than thinking, "Oh! So and so said this, so and so said that." "That person is jealous of me" – all garbage. The whole game is happening inside you. In that space, time rolls.

The mind is part of Time; a reflection of Time. One is born out of the other. That's why, when you are happy, time moves quickly. If you don't know how time passes, then you are happy. Somebody is in the hospital; then even half an hour seems so long. You are waiting for a train, or there is a

delay in your flight. You are all alone and you have read the entire newspaper and still you don't feel time passing.

You can see this on the railway platforms in India. People lean over to see whether the train is moving. I once saw an old lady doing this and told her, "Mother, the train is very big! If it moves you can't miss it; but if you lean over, you will fall down. Sit in the train and relax. It makes a big sound, it's not an ant."

I remember an incident in school. A classmate had difficulty in walking and I would accompany him home. His house was situated before mine. About a hundred feet away from his house, he would run. I would say, "You will fall down, don't run," but he would not listen. He would eventually fall on his doorstep. There was no use in my going with him all the way. Time appears to be very long when the house is so near. It would hardly have taken him three to four minutes more if he walked normally. Time appears to be very long when the mind is not here.

3. Freedom from the Known

There are two kinds of minds. One is an open mind; the other is a closed mind. A closed mind is that which says, "This is how it is," "I know it," "That is it." It gets hardened. An open mind is, "Oh, maybe!" "Perhaps! I do not know!" Limited knowledge and conformity to it makes a mind very hard. Whenever you seem to understand a situation and label it, "This is how it is," the problem begins.

All problems always arise from knowing, not from 'not knowing!' If you do not know, your mind is open. You do not label something you do not know. Whenever you think injustice has been done to you, whenever you think you are a victim, whenever you think something bad has happened to you, your thoughts are in the category of "I know it. This is how things are."

Suffering is a product of limited knowledge. A question is a sign of limited knowledge. But when there is amazement, patience, joy, waiting then you are in a state of "I don't know, maybe, something. Oh, what is it? I don't know." It is something you cannot pinpoint. The whole life is a shift from the limited 'I know' to all possibilities. You think you know the world, but that is the biggest problem. This is not just one world. There are many layers here.

When you are upset, it is because of some reason. Some string is being pulled. When your mind is open to many possibilities, an event could happen for many reasons. An event is not just in the gross level but in subtle level as well. Suppose you enter your room and find that someone at home has made a big mess, you are irritated. You link the cause of your anger to the person who is present there, but there is something more happening in the subtle. At that moment, something else is in the air but you can only see that person creating a mess and therefore attribute all the anger to him or her.

This is what limited knowledge does. Even after experiencing it you don't see something beyond. This is most amazing. There is a proverb in India: "You fell into the well in the daytime, which you could see in the night."

You saw the pit in the night, you were careful, and avoided it and walked, but in the daytime you fell in the same pit. What does this mean? That your eyes were not open, you were not sensitive enough to see and recognise what was going on.

As we attach events and emotions to individuals, the cycle continues. You will never be free from it. So, first detach an event and emotion from that person, space and time. This is called Astrology. It is the knowledge of oneness of the universe. If you prick your finger with a pin, your entire body knows it and feels it. Every cell is connected with the whole of you. In the same way, every body is connected to the entire creation, to everybody. there is only one life at a very subtle level, though it appears to be many in the gross.

If you go deeper and deeper, there is one existence, one divine. So the wise person never labels individuals; in fact, for a wise person, all individual existence ceases. That is why one should not see any intention behind the other's mistakes; attribute them to somebody and hold it against them. One truly knows and understands that it is nobody's business and nobody's mistake.

The mind drops cravings and aversions and becomes free. This is one way of putting it. Another way of putting it is that the mind ceases to exist.

4. Mind and Attachment

Craving comes from encouraging thoughts of pleasure. Yet the actual experience of pleasure may not be as pleasurable as the memory of it. A Divine thought, as well as a worldly one, give pleasure/joy. Worldly thoughts lead to indulgence, bringing you down from pleasure to disappointment and dejection. Divine thoughts take you up from pleasure to bliss, intelligence and progress in life. Worldly thoughts bring pleasure only as memory, while Divine thoughts come as reality.

Question: “What is a Divine thought?”

Sri Sri: I am not the body; I am bliss, *satchitananda*; I am unbounded space; I am love; I am peace; I am light.

Question: “What is a worldly thought?”

Sri Sri: Worldly thoughts are about money, sex, food, power, status and self-image.

Truth is hidden by the golden veil of the mundane. Pierce through this thin glittering sheath and know you are the sun.

5. Mind and Misery

The mind lives on 'more.' Misery starts with 'more and more', and it makes you dense and gross.

The Self is subtle. To pass from the gross to the subtle, you must go through the finest level of the relative – the atom. To overcome aversion, hatred, jealousy, attraction or entanglements, you have to take yourself to the atom. Taking yourself to the atom means accepting a tiny bit of this.

It may be difficult to accept something you do not like but you can definitely accept a tiny bit of it – an atom. The moment you accept that one atom, you will see a change occur. This needs to be done in a meditative state.

Suppose you love someone. You want more and more of him or her. Yet, there is no fulfillment. In *anu vrat* – the vow of an atom – you take just one atom of that person and that is enough to bring fulfillment in you. Though the river is vast; but a little sip quenches your thirst. The earth has so much food; but a little bite satisfies your hunger. All that you need are tiny bits. Accept a tiny bit of everything in life – that will bring you fulfillment.

6. Mind and Negativity

Negativity cannot remain without a hook to hang on. Positivity and happiness can exist without any reason.

The mind goes on trying to find a hook for its negativity – this person or that thing or another person. This perpetuates *maya*. The creeping vine of negativity needs a support to grow. However negativity or aversion for even one person can guarantee a one-way ticket to hell. Nothing else is required.

Negativity is an indicator for you to move to your centre and to broaden your vision to cosmic intelligence. Instead of focusing your attention on a hook for your negativity, look at the seed of the negativity. With meditation, silence and *kriya*, the source of negativity is nipped in the bud.

7. Mind and Resistance

Do you welcome all that comes to you or do you resist everything? If you cannot resist anything, you cannot welcome anything. You cannot resist everything and you cannot welcome everything.

You do not welcome all thoughts that come to your mind. When you welcome a thought, it means you find it good and act on it. If you act on all thoughts that come to your mind, you will end up in a mental hospital or in prison. So, you resist or ignore some thoughts and you welcome other thoughts. You need discrimination in life. Welcoming and resisting are part of the swing in life. Welcoming is essential for expansion and growth, and resistance is essential for maintenance.

Question: “But what you resist persists!”

Sri Sri: If you resist a cold, it does not persist. If there is no resistance in your body, you cannot survive. Your body resists some things and welcomes other things.

Where resistance is weak, persistence results. Weak resistance makes opposition persist. A strong resistance erases the opposition. Strong resistance leads to valour, power and *samadhi* – equanimity. It creates the strength of a warrior in you. Nothing can tempt you nor obstruct you. Victory is gained without fighting. Where there is strong resistance or total acceptance, victory is gained without any fighting.

8. Mind and Understanding

There are three kinds of understanding – intellectual understanding, experienced understanding and existential realisation.

Intellectual understanding says “yes” – it agrees. Experienced understanding feels – it is obvious. Existential realisation is irrefutable – it becomes your very nature.

If you have only an intellectual understanding, you will think you know everything. Most theologians are in this category. You can understand intellectually that you are hollow and empty but sitting and feeling that you are hollow and empty is totally different. All that you hear will just remain a jumble of words if there is no experienced understanding, which is more on the feeling level. When you have an experience, you want to understand more about it and so you become a seeker. Existential realisation comprises of experienced as well as intellectual understanding. yet, it is beyond both of these. How do you achieve existential realisation? There is no way to achieve it. When the fruit becomes ripe, it falls.

9. Mind and Meditation

Focus sharpens the mind and relaxation expands the mind. An expanded mind without sharpness cannot bring holistic development. At the same time, a sharp mind without expansion causes tension, anger and frustration.

The balance of a focused mind and an expanded consciousness brings perfection. *Sudarshan Kriya* and the Advanced Course techniques aim at developing consciousness that is sharp and unbounded. *Seva* and commitment play a major role in this, as does the food you eat and your attitude in daily life.

Expanded consciousness is peace and joy. Focused consciousness is love and creativity. A point of focused consciousness is individual self. When every atom of the expanded consciousness becomes sharp and focused, that is the awakening of Divinity.

10. Mind and Freedom

We usually do only that which is purposeful, useful and rational. All that is seen is seen through the rational mind. However, intuition, discovery and new knowledge go beyond the rational mind. Truth is beyond the rational mind. The rational mind is like a railroad track that is fixed in grooves. An airplane has no tracks; it can fly anywhere. A balloon can float anywhere.

Some people step out of the rational mind in order to rebel against society. They want to break the social law for the sake of their egos. They do it out of anger, hatred and rebelliousness, and to attract attention. They may think it is stepping out of the rational mind. But, it is not.

We step out of the rational mind when we do something that has no purpose. Accepting that as an act makes it a game. Life becomes lighter. If you are stuck with only rational acts, life becomes a burden. Playing a game without a thought of a win or a loss is so much more enjoyable. Performing an act without a purpose attached to it is freedom. It is like a dance. So just step out of the rational mind. You will find greater freedom and an unfathomable depth. You will come face-to-face with reality. Reality transcends logic and the rational mind. Until you transcend the rational mind, you will not gain access to creativity and the infinite.

However if you perform an irrational act in order to find freedom, then it already has a purpose and a meaning. It is no longer irrational. It has already spoiled its own possibility.

Break through the barrier of the rational mind and find freedom for yourself.

11. Mind and the Self

When you are miserable, know that you have gone away from the Self. This is called *ashaucha* – becoming unclean.

In India, when someone dies, the close relatives are said to be *ashaucha* for 10 days because they are very sad. They are impure because they have moved away from the Self. After 10 days of just living through the experience and reading the Bhagavad Gita, gaining the knowledge and pulling themselves back into the Self, they become *shaucha*. They have purged the impurities that arose during these events.

This happens again and again in life. You become *ashaucha* and then you must get back to *shaucha*. Go deeper into yourself; then real *shaucha* happens.

Shaucha's benefits are intellectual clarity, a pleasing mind, focused awareness, control over the senses and ability to realise the Self.

Shaucha is disinterest in the tendencies of your own senses and a sense of detachment from other people. If some tendency arises in your body, just have the understanding, "Oh yes, here is this old familiar tendency again. Come on, I have had this experience enough, and still my body craves for it again." Become disinterested in your own body; this is just an idea, a sort of distaste and in one moment it changes.

Why do people love each other so much, have such an intimate relationship, and then quarrel? *Ashaucha* has happened. If you do not dislike the tendency of the senses, then dislike for the object of the senses will come and you will blame the object.

When *ashaucha* happens, quickly come back to *shaucha*. Suppose you feel drowned in any worldly aspect, just know this is *ashaucha* – "That is why I am miserable." Then come back to *shaucha*.

Your attraction or craving can exist only as long as you think someone is 'other'. When you think they are a part of you or your Self, then the

attraction dies out. That is why a husband or a wife may not be attracted to their partner but to someone else, because their partner has already become a part of them. When you realise everyone is a part of your Self, you enjoy the whole world without a sense of craving.

12. Mind and Timelessness

When the mind is happy, it expands; then time is too short. When the mind is unhappy, it contracts; then time is too long. When the mind is in equanimity, it transcends time.

To escape from the two extremes, many resort to alcohol or sleep but when the mind is dull or unconscious, it is unable to experience itself. *Samadhi* – no-mindedness or timelessness – is peace, the real peace. That is the greatest healer.

Just as the mind experiences time, this moment has a mind of its own. It is the Big Mind with enormous and infinite organising power. Thought is nothing but a ripple in this moment, and a few moments of *samadhi* infuse the mind with energy.

Before you fall into a slumber or as soon as you wake from sleep, in the twilight moments of consciousness, experience timelessness.

13. The Mature Mind

Children say, “I should always eat sweets. I always want to eat chocolate.” This is a silly desire of children. If you always eat chocolate, you stop getting its taste. You don’t get the contrast. As you grow older, you know that it doesn’t matter. You don’t need to have sweets all the time.

In the same way, you don’t need to be tranquil all the time. You can get disturbed for a while. So what? Life is a totality: It has everything in it. Vyasa had written all the eighteen *Puranas*. There is nothing that Vyasa has not touched in the world except that the entire world is the leftover – *uchchista*. Vyasa himself became unhappy, at one time, after writing the *Puranas*; after having written all the *Vedas*, the *Puranas* and *Ashtadasha Purana*.

Vyasa once said after writing the *Mahabharata*, “Oh! I am lifting both my arms and crying to people, who by hearing me will get both material and spiritual benefits, but nobody is coming to me. What can I do?” The brilliance of Vyasa is unparalleled, because he had presented all the principles in the form of stories. There was something for a child, for a teenager, for an adult and for a *sannyasi*.

Anybody reading Vyasa will surely gain something. But Vyasa himself became unhappy. And then Vyasa tells that the *Bhagavatham* came: Sukhdeva came and said, “Okay, all this knowledge is there but something is lacking.” What was it? It was the devotional aspect of it. Then the *Bhagavatham* was created. Thus, in every mistake there is something beneficial. Every event gives something. So don’t say, “I should always be at peace.” It doesn’t matter even if you are disturbed at times.

The Story of Brihaspathi and Chandra

In the *Puranas*, there is a story about Jupiter or *Guru* being wedded to the star Tara. A star is something that is far away. Brihaspathi (Jupiter) is the guru of the *devas*. Tara eloped with Chandra, the moon. Then, they had a son, Mercury. When *Guru* discovered this, he told Chandra, “You better give me back my wife. She is my wife.” Then Chandra and Brihaspathi had

a fight and finally all the *devas* came and requested Chandra to give her up. So, she was returned to her husband.

This is the story. On the surface it seems funny but when you look into it in a very subtle way, there is a beautiful sense in it. *Guru* is the Self, Brihaspathi, *Devaguru* – master of all the gods. That is the Self. Moon is the mind. Tara is the universe. So, what happened? Self is the innocent level where everyone is like a child, and the Self is connected to the universe. The innocence is one with the infinity.

As the mind becomes enlarged, one grows in the mind and the connection between the Self and the universe is cut off. However, the connection between the mind and the world begins. With this relationship of the mind with the universe, it expands to the extent of giving birth to awareness. Mercury is Buddha, the *Pragyakaraka*, i.e. the bestower of wisdom or awareness. So the mind and the universe realise that to them is born this awareness of the Self back again.

When the awareness of the Self is born, then the universe re-unites with the Self and the mind is removed. The mind becomes a no-mind. It gets detached from the world. So Tara got detached or Chandra got himself detached from Tara. The whole universe is detached from the mind and then it is re-united. The universe merges with the Self, to which it already belongs.

So, in astrology it is said that Mercury is the son of the Moon, that is, awareness is born out of the mind only. A mentally retarded person cannot have awareness. Awareness is born out of mature mind; and from that awareness, wisdom develops. *Guru* is the Self; that which unites with the Self. It is a very beautiful story but very few have understood the meaning in the right way.

There is no Absolute Value in anything but the Self.

Stories like the one about Ekalavya are truly inspiring. Everyone doesn't cut off their thumbs all the time, and anyway what good was it to people who had their thumbs all along? In history one man cut off his thumb, and let's

go of the attachment to his skill. He was very intelligent. What good does archery do? Nothing.

You can look at any situation and be for or against it; both will hold good. Look at the illiterate and innocent people. They are so happy and have such smiles on their faces. Look at all those who are educated and cultured and see the amount of tension and stress in their lives. What good is it to go to school?

You can see everything from different angles. This is only to glorify the value of sacrifice. One can have great skills, and attachment to those skills can make one's life very miserable. Stars, musicians, teachers etc. are all talented but they get so obsessed and arrogant about it that they make their own lives miserable. One's willingness to let go of one's skills brings one eternal peace and strength.

It is said that the Divine is permeating everything equally – including the wise and the foolish. God lives in everything. *Eersha Vaasya Edam Sarvam / Yatha Kinchith Jagathyam Jagath / Tena Tyakthana Bunjitha / Ma Dhutha Tasya Sidhanam.*

Eersha Vaasya. He lives in everything, it says, because *Edam Sarvam*, this is what you see. This is all. The Divine lives in the entire world. Do not blame this world. If you want to blame, blame consciously. *Yatha Kinchith Jagathyam Jagath*, whatever is moving, unmoving, little, small, or big, everywhere, *Tena Tyakthana Bunjitha*, you enjoy this by letting go. Whatever you hold on to, creates fear in you. If you are fearful, you cannot enjoy it.

If you hold on to your skill, then you are afraid of someone becoming more skillful. You are afraid of losing it. The fear in you will block happiness. This is exactly what happens with most of the artists. They hold onto their art so tight, ever alert to anybody waiting to pull them down. Only a brave person can say, "Let go!"

Tena Tyakthana Bunjitha / Ma Dhutha Tasya Sidhanam. Don't have grudges, jealousy, hatred or envy towards anybody. Everything is common

property. In another thousand years so many people will come and go. How can you say, “Oh! This is my house, my place, my room.”

The True Seeker

Truth always has value. A skill is needed to express it. We often say we are very honest and very truthful. But why do all these problems come to us. It is because we are not skillful.

To bring out the best in you, you have to become Arjuna. Among so many, only Arjuna got the knowledge. Why? What does Arjuna mean? One who is thirsty for the truth – the true seeker. You don’t become a seeker just to show off or to get your way around in the world. You can become a teacher and go on teaching and have nothing inside you. You just build up your own ego. It won’t help. The truth seeker is Arjuna – who wants to know the truth.

There are so many gurus, but once you come to *Bhagwan*, your miseries end. And it’s not through the guru’s teaching that you get something. that is just superficial. Dronacharya and Kripacharya can teach you archery, but they cannot make you meet your Self. For that, you come to a *sadguru* and just sit. Everything works silently. And then, for all the other gymnastics that you want to learn, you need to be with Dronacharya and Kripacharya.

14. Your Questions Answered

Q: When I start to read or write my mind gets distracted to other subjects. Please suggest how I can concentrate and reach or achieve my goal?

Sri Sri: Energy comes to us from three sources – one is food, the other is sleep and the third is breath. You all know that when you lack energy you must eat and you also know when you lack energy you must sleep, but you don't know, or you at least pretend you don't know, that you have to breathe properly in order to be energetic. So, if you learn *pranayama* and do some *kriya* and breathing, it can change your energy level. When your energy level changes, your mind becomes calm and more concentrated.

Concentration is a byproduct of meditation. Meditation is de-concentration. You have the notion that meditation is concentration. It is not so. In fact, it is the opposite of concentration. We need concentration for doing work but for meditation you don't need concentration. anybody can meditate. meditation results in alertness and focus of the mind.

Q: What does meditation do to the mind?

Sri Sri: Meditation is not trying to think something. Meditation is relaxing deeply. If you are concentrating on the problem then you are not relaxing. So what do you do? You just let go. It is almost like sleep but not sleep. That is what happens right after *kriya*. When you are lying down, what is there in the mind? There is nothing. It is blank. This is meditation. When you are really happy or when you are resting; what is the state? That is the meditative mind. When you are deeply in love and reposing in it, you are meditating.

Q: Should we fire the mind, when something goes wrong?

Sri Sri: You know, we convey or communicate more by our presence and not so much by our words. Do you get what I am saying? You may tell to somebody, "I love you very much", but if he doesn't feel your presence, he will not get your love. If there is anger, frustration and a feeling of failure in your presence, then love doesn't hook on to the person. So, we have to

clean our presence. We need to make it like that of child. There is so much love in it. It is not enough to just talk about love. The cleansing of our presence, our vibrations and of our negative impulses is required.

Q: How would you totally surrender and let go?

Sri Sri: Know that you cannot surrender. What are you going to surrender? Do you have anything to surrender in the first place? Surrender is an illusion because you think you have something and then you feel you are giving it away. So, if you are not able to surrender, then know by knowledge that there is nothing that you possess that you can surrender. Do you possess this world? Do you possess your body? No. It has all been given to you.

If surrender is difficult, then use knowledge. In knowledge you will know that you have nothing and that you are nothing. That will automatically bring the quality of surrender to the consciousness. You will attain surrender through knowledge. If you are an emotional person, then you will say, “Okay! I am giving everything to you.” then, you will get the knowledge that you are nothing and the Divine is all that is.

Q: How can I free myself from fears that seem to have settled into me years ago? I know they are irrational and just in my head. Yet here they come up over and over again. They are distracting and feel binding to me!

Sri Sri: Meditate! Sit quietly and meditate, or listen to some chanting music. All this will help. Meditation, some *pranayama*, *kriya*, some exercises, *ujayi* breath are very good for fears. Don't think that fear is somewhere deep inside you. It is an erroneous notion of psychology that fear and guilt are deep down. I tell you, deep down there is only a lot of joy; a lot of bliss. And in that centre – no fear, no guilt, no anger, no lust can touch you. Deep down you are wonderful. So never think you have all these anxieties. Those who say that there is something wrong deep down are blind. It is all there just on the surface. If they call that deep, then I will suggest to go deeper. in the centre of your being, you are a fountain of joy. Saying, “Oh! My mind! Deep down there is anxiety!” is ignorance; a wrong idea and concept. The moment you accept these words as truth, it starts becoming more difficult to

get over those emotions. They become more permanent there. Do you see that?

Q: How can I overcome anger and resentment?

Sri Sri: Don't try to overcome both. Tackle them one by one. I say, stop the resentment and agree to be angry. Anger and resentment have a chain reaction – you get angry and then you resent; resentment will then turn to anger. Either you are angry with somebody or you are angry with yourself. You are angry with yourself and this causes anger towards somebody else. You may be angry with somebody else but then, as soon as your anger fades, you resent yourself and feel, “How could I lose my temper like that?” So, first decide to be just angry. It does not matter. Just get rid of resentment. This is the first step you can take.

Anger is part of your life. As a child you would get very angry. Look at a small child who is holding a toy; just take the toy away from him and see his reaction. His whole body shakes and he gets angry. He yells and shouts, but he is normal the next instant. It doesn't take a child very long to do this.

You get angry, but the next moment bring the smile back to your face. Don't resent. Laugh at your own anger – “Oh, I had a big blow-up today! It was fantastic. It is such fun to watch others' faces when I get angry! How they reacted to my anger! How soon they caught on to it!” You will soon see that the anger in you turns into alertness; into awareness. That is where *pranayama* and *kriya* will come to your aid over a period of time. The resentment had stopped earlier, and now the anger will gradually disappear.

Q: Why is there such excessive fear in society these days? And how can it be eliminated?

Sri Sri: Society has no mind of its own. Fear is in the mind of its people. Fear is in the individual. Fear will be there if there is no love, otherwise the love will turn into hatred. There are only two possibilities for the absence of fear. First, if there is hatred in society then there is no fear. See what is happening in former Yugoslavia. There is no fear there. Or Lebanon - no fear there, too. There is hatred in these places. People there don't fear for their lives. All that they want is to finish the other people – finish the

enemy; finish the other person who does not belong to their group. Hatred, intense hatred! Second, if there is love in society then there is no fear.

Love, hatred and fear – one of these three will prevail in a society at any point of time. What do we do today? Do we spread hatred or do we spread love or do we spread fear? What are we interested in spreading? Have you ever thought about it? It is very subtle. You will be amazed when you study your own mind. The moment you hear some disastrous news, you start talking about it. Actually, you enjoy talking about it. Someone says there might be an earthquake and immediately the news spreads like wild fire. The whole city starts talking about the earthquake that might occur. Many religions declare that there is going to be a disaster in the world; that you will go to hell. In all religions, this fear was kept as an element. And it does some good to you. It keeps people who have not yet blossomed in love, in some discipline at least. The purpose behind it is that if we cannot kindle love, then kindle some fear. At least, then the hatred will not be there; thus, the expression, ‘God-fearing’. A God-fearing man is considered to be a wonderful person. The idea is that if you can’t love God, at least fear Him. Fear is much better than hatred.

But today there is no fear in society; there is hatred. However, this hatred is not of a permanent nature. Beneath it there is love. The people need love, the world needs love. All of you will have to go around and kindle that love back into their lives. Everyone has to re-light that lamp in their hearts. Give them the support and instill the confidence in them that the Divine loves them. Tell them that there is a lot of love and we are all one. This is the need of the day!

Q: What is the genesis of negative attitude?

Sri Sri: Stress and tension cause negative attitudes. Why, if you don’t sleep for even two days, then small things tend to irritate you. Whereas if you are well rested the situation is different. Don’t allow any kind of stress or tension to build up.

Q: Do you believe that most allergies are psychosomatic?

Sri Sri: I don't *believe* it. Do you know the reason? Because I *know* it. What you know you don't have to believe, and what you believe you real y don't know. Definitely, most of our problems could be psychosomatic. What does psychosomatic mean? That the mind has a say in the situation, right? The body and the mind cannot be separated, because body-mind is a complex. Our life is not linear. It is multidimensional. Truth is not linear; it is multidimensional. So, any health situation definitely has the mind's role in it. It is a combination of both –something physical and something mental.

Q: When I try to understand people, places and situations I end up finding faults in myself; it makes me feel that I want to become a better person. However, this affects my self-confidence. How do I overcome it? When will I ever become confident?

Sri Sri: You know, that is where the process of surrender comes to your aid. To whom you surrender is immaterial – to God, to your mother, to anybody. When you surrender you drop your ego and you feel lighter. Surrender is a technique by which you dump all the garbage of the mind. What else do you have to surrender? The Divine doesn't want your talents, and you can't surrender your talents because they are gifts to you. The Divine certainly doesn't want your money. And if you think you will surrender your power, then you are mistaken because you have no power at all in this world.

You feel you are losing control when you have no control over thoughts running in your mind. Drop all the negativities, and worries that you carry around in you. Surrender all of them to God, and be happy. Only then will we gain the power. In South Indian temples when you bow down before God, the priest comes and places a crown on your head. The symbolism is that when you are devoted to God, you real y become a king, and you get crowned. They just put on the crown for a moment and then take it off and put it on the next person's head. They shift from one person to another, and everyone becomes a king. But the original idea was of *sharanagati* (surrender). When you surrender to God you become a king. You wear a crown on your head and you walk as if you are carrying the Lord of the universe in your heart – such confidence, such joy, such happiness, and such a smile!

We are here to give to the world. If you are a giver you are always winning. If you are a taker then, without your knowledge, you are losing. If you think what you can do, how you can contribute and how you can make people happy then your needs will be met.

Q: You give us such wonderful knowledge, yet whenever the time comes in our daily lives, we are back to our little minds. What to do?

Sri Sri: Doesn't this knowledge help you when you really need it?! When you were regretting something, you suddenly came back to the present moment. Hasn't it occurred to you? A very little time spent on this has brought so much transformation in you. If you spend some more time and go deep into this knowledge and study, you'll find that there will be amazing growth in you.

Q: Guruji, how do I silence my mind?

Sri Sri: The will to silence itself pays in many ways. Meditation and *Sudarshan Kriya* helps, too.

Q: When you were guiding us through the meditation, my mind took me far away and I couldn't even hear your instructions!

Sri Sri: That's good. The goal is to forget!

Q: What is the significance of waiting in meditation?

Sri Sri: What is happening in your mind when you have to wait? What is happening in your mind right now? Do you feel the time passing? This waiting can take you into meditation. When you have to wait, you will get either frustrated or meditative. Meditation is 'feeling the time'. Can you observe every moment that is passing by right now?!

Q: What is meditation for the mind?

Sri Sri: It's very simple. When the mind becomes free from agitation, becomes calm and serene, and is at peace, meditation takes place. By

meditating, you can turn your body into a powerhouse through the generation of an inner source of energy.

Q: What are the benefits of meditation?

Sri Sri: You will not have blood pressure problems. Health problems will be solved, the mind becomes clear, intuition develops, obstacles are removed and mental peace and happiness dawn. Negative influences due to the planets are removed. Any problem becomes small before reaching you. There will be plenty of other benefits.

Q: Is there any maximum limit to how much we can meditate?

Sri Sri: Just do as much is necessary. There is no need to do too much. Meditation is like taking a bath. To wash the mind, you need meditation. And once the mind is clean, you will be well.

Q: Why do I lose my concentration when I meditate?

Sri Sri: Concentration is not meditation. Meditation is de-concentration. It is letting go. Meditation calms the mind. It feels good. But in our daily life we have to handle paying bills, parking tickets and other mundane things. How can we do this with the same calm mind without getting irritated or perturbed?

You take a shower in the morning to clean your body. After that you do all the daily activities. You don't have to keep on taking a shower throughout the day. It is like that. You meditate and calm your mind, then go on with other activities. It is not easy to keep yourself undisturbed but it will happen if you keep doing the practices regularly. Then keeping yourself calm will become easy.

Q: Why is meditation so boring?

Sri Sri: It may be boring in the beginning, but that will gradually change. Stay on. Go step by step. Meditation is resting in yourself; becoming the seer rather than being the seen.

Q: Why do old memories bother me when I sit for meditation?

Sri Sri: It does not matter. So don't lose heart! Let the memories come! Say, "Come, sit with me, my five-year-old memories, my ten-year-old memories, my 20-year-old memories. Come sit with me." The more you want to run away from them, the more the memories will bother you.

Q: What should I do with the conflict in my mind?

Sri Sri: The moment you realise that there is so much conflict in your mind, your eyes open. *Satsang* and *pranayamas* can put an end to it.

Q: Are mind and Self one and the same?

Sri Sri: Are the wave and the ocean the same?! Mind is the wave and Self is the ocean.

Q: What is equanimity? What is the significance of silence?

Sri Sri: The brain has two sides. The left side is for logic and the right side is for music. Both these sides are needed to make a whole. If there is only music then the brain will not function properly. If there is only a mathematical and logical mind then there will be no feelings and we will be deprived of the finer aspects of life. So, both are needed. When you are endowed with both, then it becomes a *satsang*.

We observe silence only during mourning. But here it's different. It's not like the silence of mourning. In mourning, we can't stand silence for more than two minutes. Here, it's an inner silence, a joyful silence. Before you go into silence, clear your brains of troubles. Put your troubles away in a basket and calm your mind; and when your mind is silenced you will experience true peace.

Q: Why is observing silence so important for the mind?

Sri Sri: When there is joy, silence will come on its own. You are not used to silence, so you keep talking. If they cannot talk, some people feel uneasy.

The first day of your silence will be like that. But gradually you will get used to it.

In silence, lots of thoughts will come – unwanted thoughts, old and new thoughts. Let them come. What you need to do is experience and enjoy your own company.

Real silence happens when you are in your Self and your hearts are full of joy. If you are bored in your own company then think how boring you must be for others! And then, two people bored with themselves cannot give joy to each other, can they?!

Q: Why do we get angry?

Sri Sri: Desires, work and stress make you angry, especially when your work is failing. This frustration annoys you. You have to do *kriya*, meditation, *pranayama* and *sadhana*. When you are tired, you feel greater anger. Isn't it? If you are tired and your children come to you and ask, "Why are the clouds moving? Where are they going?" you'll snap at them. But when you're calm, you will answer them with patience.

Q: Guruji, how can one focus, have a vision and still be in the present moment?

Sri Sri: Do not think that having a vision is contradictory to living in the present. You can have a vision and be in the present moment. Being total y in the present moment can give you a better vision and focus for the future.

Q: Many gurus preach about poise of mind. They don't know the difficulties of a girl or a woman who feels tension and insecurity.

Sri Sri: Not only women, but many boys have the same problem. Women express their insecurity, men don't. Women, at least, get compassion in society; men do not. Spiritual practices get rid of insecurity. People who are poor think that only they are insecure, and the rich are not. It's the other way round. The rich worry about money and can't trust anybody. A rich man suspects his children, wife, everyone. There is much more insecurity for a rich person than for a poor.

Q: Why does the mind crave for good things?

Sri Sri: When a baby tastes something sweet, it wants to taste sweet all the time. It wants it again and again. You don't need to do anything too much; just as much as is necessary.

Q: How do we integrate mind, matter and Master?

Sri Sri: You cannot integrate the Master. If you integrate Master, then the Master is small. 'He' cannot be integrated; he is the Master. That is why we say, "It does not matter." Mind is not matter at all.

Q: What should one do to dispel resistance in meditation and *kriya*; resistance to allow anything to happen?

Sri Sri: Resistance is resistance, but ensure that no resistance stops you. You are not a slave of your emotions. You feel and behave as if you are. If you have focus and determination, you will not care about them. You say: "Oh! I feel like this." or "I feel like that." What is such a big deal about a feeling?! You feel good, and then you feel bad, then you feel good, and then you feel bad again. It is changing all the time. Hasn't that been happening?!

If you base your lives on your feelings you will get nowhere. Five minutes ago you were feeling bad. Five minutes later, you feel good. Another five minutes later, you may feel bad again. What is the big thing about it? Feelings come and go. They keep changing. So don't be a football of your own feelings. Just stand back and say, "Okay, let me see what it is." That is dedication. That is determination. When doing a job, say studying medicine, you normally say, "I'm exhausted. I don't feel like doing this. I don't want to study any further," isn't it? But if there is dedication, you say, "No. I don't care about how I feel. I will go ahead." And then you are successful.

Q: How do I deal most effectively with the fear that pops up in my life?

Sri Sri: Observe the sensation, and the fear turns within a few minutes into love.

Q: A lot of people are dying of heart attacks. How do we heal their minds and hearts?

Sri Sri: Through proper food, rest, breathing and some meditation. We have four sources of energy – the first is food, the second is sleep, the third and most important but most neglected source of energy is breath, and the fourth is the meditative mind. With a calm and pleasant mind, if you attend to these four sources, you will definitely improve your health. Many people have already experienced this.

Q: How do I stop this continual grumbling in my head?

Sri Sri: Look at all that you have. Feel grateful for it. If you are grateful, you will not grumble. You have eyes, you can see. You have ears to hear, you have a nose to smell, and you have a tongue that can tell you whether it is a pizza or an apple. The other day somebody came and said “I have lost the sense of taste. I don’t know what I’m eating anymore – whether I am having a dessert or the main course. Everything tastes the same.” I said, “This is a very interesting experience.” So, be grateful for what has been bestowed on you and your grumbling will stop.”

Q: Please take away my guilt! I feel guilty even asking this.

Sri Sri: Guilt is a sharp and deep sensation, which is very close to sadness, to pain, and to love, too. When you feel guilty, don’t try to brush it away. It is not possible to get rid of your guilt that way. Go deep into it. You will see that the guilt is no longer there; it breaks apart; it disappears. Remember this law: Whatever you resist, will persist.

Q: What is the right thing to do when we feel confused or upset?

Sri Sri: When you are confused whatever you do tends to feel wrong. Whatever choice you make, you feel that the other would have been better. Isn’t it? There is a Chinese proverb that says, “When you feel confused, take a pillow and go to bed.” Follow this principle. When you are upset or confused, no decision feels right and then there is regret. With the mind undergoing constant regret, there will be poison in your system. It will even reduce the strength of your immune system.

Every moment your mind is swinging to either the past or the future. You are angry about the past, which is of no use. It's anyway all happened. You may be anxious about the future – what will happen tomorrow, the next day, the third day!

Living your entire life in anger or anxiety is not very wise. Yoga helps to bring the mind to the present moment. It helps stop the regret or the anxiety by releasing all the toxins from every cell of the body, and then letting them out. All built-up anger and regret are released.

There is so much built up in you. You are on the street and stuck in the traffic, and you think, "Oh! I should have taken another street or some other road." You reach home and say the same thing, "I should have taken another road." It's regret, and the regret gets registered in the whole DNA in the whole body. Little by little our regrets mount, and one day you blow up. When you do yoga and *kriya*, it releases the built-up stress of that day itself, so that it doesn't accumulate. It all leaves you lighter and joyful.

Q: What role does laughter play in wellbeing?

Sri Sri: Laughter is a sign of wellbeing, isn't it? If you can laugh, if you can smile, then that is wellbeing. But we sell our smiles for peanuts. Smiles are worth a lot! There is nothing as valuable as our smiles in the whole world, in the whole creation. I say that even if the whole world is given to you and traded for your smile, please never give away your smile. It's not worth it! Your smile is precious and it is a gift to you. It's natural to you. Please preserve it, please maintain it. Don't sell it for anything in the world. If you can, always remember, "Come what may, I will keep my smile with me," then you will see that nothing will really shake you. You see, small things or a few words from someone may upset you for days and your mind groans continuously, having its own dialogue. Is it worth it?!

Q: How do you feel about healing old emotions – wounds from childhood experiences? Is it helpful?

Sri Sri: First of all, believing that old emotions and wounds are present deep inside you is an illusion. When you feel that you have many deep wounds

and childhood emotions within you, and that you want to heal them, then you are doing something impossible.

It's like trying to catch a cat which is not there. See that?

Every time you remember, "Oh! I had this childhood emotion and I want to heal it," then you are reinforcing those experiences. You can go for counselling for fifteen years, twenty years, but you'll find that you are not healed; that there is something still present. You may feel some momentary relief but the old emotions will return. This is not the way to get rid of negative emotions. You need to attend to its root cause. What is it?

An emotion creates a sensation in the body. De-link the sensation from the event and observe the sensation, observe the breath. Through the breath you will overcome the sensation and the emotion. This healing is natural and spontaneous. First of all, know that none of these events or emotions has touched you deeply. Your soul and your being is immortal. It is light. Can anything touch light? Can darkness ever touch light? It has never happened, nor will it ever happen. Any impressions that was created was only at the circumference; at the periphery. This is a very beautiful science. It is wonderful understanding it. That is what meditation does. Meditation takes you into direct contact with yourself, wherein you find that you are invincible; that there is nothing, that there are no wounds in you. If there are any scars at all they are only on the periphery. The periphery gets healed by itself, the moment you realise that you are simple. So, please never go on thinking, "My father said this", "My mother said this" – don't go on linking all the time. Do some practices like *pranayama* and meditation and you will be wonderful and healthy.

Q: How can I be joyous and giving?

Sri Sri: How can you be joyous? How are you not joyous? To be happy you don't need any cause or reason. To be unhappy you need some cause; some reason. You are unhappy because of this or that – because you didn't get a job, because somebody said this, etc: So, unhappiness has a reason. But joy is our very nature.

Q: What is the difference between the small mind and the big mind?

Sri Sri: The small mind is that which gets you in trouble and the Big Mind is that which gets you out of it. The nature of the small mind is to cause trouble and the nature of the Big Mind is peace. Knowledge of the Big Mind is not given to everyone. You grow step by step. When all the necessary things are in order then knowledge dawns. The Master takes you over.

Sometimes the Big Mind wins over the small mind, and sometimes it is the other way around. When the small mind wins, it is misery; when the Big Mind wins, it is joy. The small mind promises joy and leaves you empty-handed. The Big Mind may bring resistance initially but later fills you with joy.

Jai means 'victory'. *Guru* means 'great'. *Deva* means 'the Divine who is fun-loving, playful and light'. *Jai Guru Dev* means victory to the Greatness in you; victory to the Big Mind in you that is both dignified and playful. Usually one who is playful is not dignified, and one who is dignified, is not playful. But the Divine in you – the Big Mind – is both. *Jai Guru Dev* need not be thought of as victory to the Master. Rather, it is victory to your own Self; to your own Big Mind over the wailing small mind.

Q: Guruji, why was such a complex mind created?

Sri Sri: To make it simple! If it's already simple you will have nothing to do. Knowledge comes in contrast. The complex mind can know the simplest form of mind, which is the spirit.

Q: It is my mind; why should anyone else teach me how to control it?

Sri Sri: Your legs will help drive a car, but you still have to learn to drive. The accelerator is in your car, the legs are yours, the hands are yours, and the steering is yours. Then why should someone teach you to drive a car? If you know or learn on your own, then there is no problem.

Q: Guruji, how do we control our anger?

Sri Sri: Our anger is very cheap and our smile is very expensive, whereas it should be the other way round. Be patient and let the anger pass. One

should get angry only two or three times a year. We should smile more often.

Q: I have fallen because of such a big ego. What can I do?

Sri Sri: Never mind! If you've recognised that you have fallen, you will rise higher. That is good enough. You have recognised that your ego has been the hindrance. But now don't fight your ego. Just keep it in your pocket. Let it be there. Don't try to do anything with it. Say "I like it," and let it be there. If you don't like it, give it to me, but then, I would like you to keep it with you. You know, our effort in trying to erase our ego becomes another big problem. You have enough other problems to solve anyway!

Q: How do we overcome fear of death?

Sri Sri: By doing meditation.

Q: Can meditation remove bad karma?

Sri Sri: Yes.

Q: How do we handle the mind?

Sri Sri: Take challenges. Facing many hardships makes you stronger. In military training tough situations are presented to be resolved. This makes your mind soft and undisturbed. It was a similar system in the ancient gurukuls. Otherwise, even small things can disturb you. Remember that opposite values are complementary – every hardship makes you a better and stronger person.

Q: When I lose focus, I become restless. What shall I do?

Sri Sri: It's good. If you don't feel restless after losing focus, you'll not get focused again. It's a good sign that you become restless on losing focus. This restlessness will restore the focus.

Q: In spite of doing sadhana, I'm unable to smile. How do I bring smile to my life?

Sri Sri: You are unable to smile?! Frown a little and look in mirror. Frown as much as possible and you will start laughing at yourself. If you can't smile, start faking smiles. Fake it until you make it.

Q: I want to control my mind. It wanders to many things during meditation, especially to sex!

Sri Sri: Let your mind wander in the red districts of your city. Never mind. Let it go as long as it wants. How long will it wander? Sooner or later it will be tired of all thoughts about sex, and slow down. The mind goes in search of pleasure. Slowly, with practice, it finds greater pleasure in meditation. Be patient. Keep up your practices.

**The Art of Living
&
The International Association
for Human Values
Transforming Lives**

The Founder

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a universally revered spiritual and humanitarian leader. His vision of a violence-free, stress-free society through the reawakening of human values has inspired millions to broaden their spheres of responsibility and work towards the betterment of the world. Born in 1956 in southern India, Sri Sri was often found deep in meditation as a child. At the age of four, astonishes his teachers by reciting the Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Sanskrit scripture. He has always had the unique gift of presenting the deepest truths in the simplest of words.

Sri Sri established the Art of Living, an educational and humanitarian Non-governmental Organisation that works in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 1981. Present in over 140 countries, it formulates and implements lasting solutions to conflicts and issues faced by individuals, communities and nations. In 1997, he founded the International Association for Human Values (IAHV) to foster human values and lead sustainable development projects. Sri Sri has reached out to an estimated 300 million people worldwide through personal interactions, public events, teachings, Art of Living workshops and humanitarian initiatives. He has brought to the masses ancient practices which were traditionally kept exclusive, and has designed many self development techniques which can easily be integrated into daily life to calm the mind and instill confidence and enthusiasm. One of Sri Sri's most unique offerings to the world is the Sudarshan Kriya, a powerful breathing technique that facilitates physical, mental, emotional and social well-being.

Numerous honours have been bestowed upon Sri Sri, including the Order of the Pole Star (the highest state honour in Mongolia), the Peter the Great Award (Russian Federation), the Sant Shri Dnyaneshwara World Peace Prize (India) and the Global Humanitarian Award (USA). Sri Sri has addressed several international forums, including the United Nations

Millennium World Peace Summit (2000), the World Economic Forum (2001, 2003) and several parliaments across the globe.

The Art of Living In Service Around The World

(www.artofliving.org)

The largest volunteer-based network in the world, with a wide range of social, cultural and spiritual activities, the Art of Living has reached out to over 20 million people from all walks of life, since 1982. A non-profit, educational, humanitarian organisation, it is committed to creating peace from the level of the individual upwards, and fostering human values within the global community. Currently, the Art of Living service projects and educational programmes are carried out in over 140 countries. The organisation works in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations, participating in a variety of committees and activities related to health and conflict resolution.

The Art of Living Stress Elimination Programmes

Holistic Development of Body, Mind & Spirit The Art of Living programmes are a combination of the best of ancient wisdom and modern science. They cater to every age group - children, youth, adults -and every section of society – rural communities, governments, corporate houses, etc. Emphasizing holistic living and personal self-development, the programmes facilitate the complete blossoming of an individual's full potential. The cornerstone of all our workshops is the Sudarshan Kriya, a unique, potent breathing practice.

- The Art of Living Course Part I • The Art of Living Course Part II • Sahaj Samadhi Meditation
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- Achieving Personal Excellence Program (APEX) www.apexprogram.org
- Sri Sri Yoga www.srisriyoga.in

The International Association for Human Values

(www.iahv.org)

The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) was founded in Geneva in 1997, to foster, on a global scale, a deeper understanding of the values that unite us as a single human community. Its vision is to celebrate distinct traditions and diversity, while simultaneously creating a greater understanding and appreciation of our many shared principles. To this end, the IAHV develops and promotes programmes that generate awareness and encourage the practice of human values in everyday life. It upholds that the incorporation of human values into all aspects of life, will ultimately lead to harmony amidst diversity, and the development of a more peaceful, just and sustainable world. The IAHV works in collaboration with partners dedicated to similar goals, including governments, multilateral agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, corporations and individuals.

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